

Cannon Blast

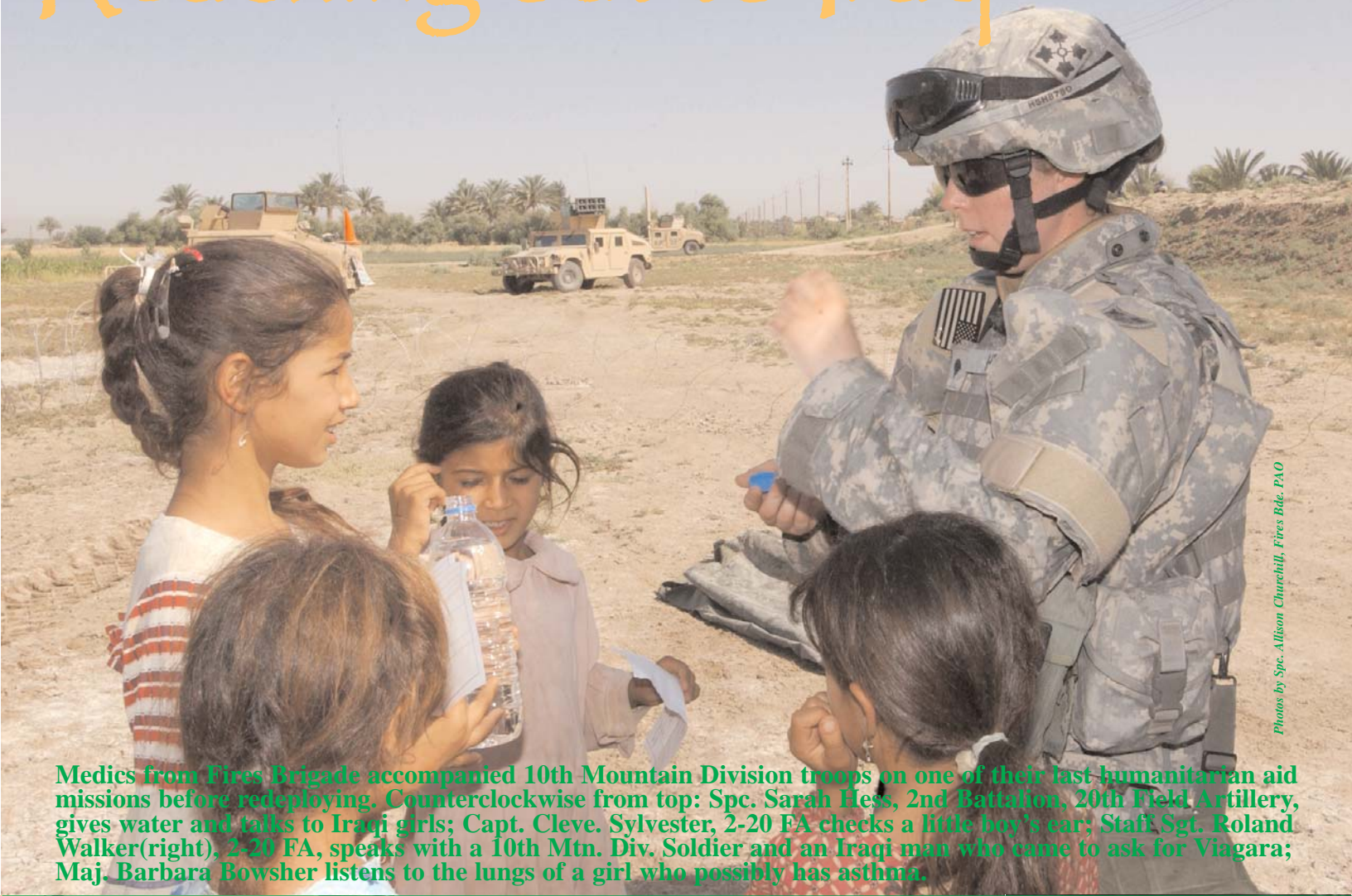
Keeping the families of Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division informed.



Vol. 1, Issue 4

July 20, 2006

Reaching out to Iraq



Photos by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

Medics from Fires Brigade accompanied 10th Mountain Division troops on one of their last humanitarian aid missions before redeploying. Counterclockwise from top: Spc. Sarah Hess, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery, gives water and talks to Iraqi girls; Capt. Cleve. Sylvester, 2-20 FA checks a little boy's ear; Staff Sgt. Roland Walker(right), 2-20 FA, speaks with a 10th Mtn. Div. Soldier and an Iraqi man who came to ask for Viagra; Maj. Barbara Bowsher listens to the lungs of a girl who possibly has asthma.



Iron Gunners remain essential to 4ID mission

Hello to all the Iron Gunner families and friends,

The summer is upon us and I can confirm for all of you back home that it is HOT here in Iraq.

But, even with the high temperatures, the Soldiers of the Brigade are performing every mission they are assigned to standard, safely and effectively.

The long, hot summer days signal yet another milestone that we are about to surpass as we have only four months remaining in our deployment.

Through each day, Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela and I constantly see the men and women of the brigade performing at their best, in every condition you could imagine. We are truly proud to serve alongside them.

Since the last newsletter, 2nd



By Col. Allen Batschelet

and division.

The brigade separates, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 324th Network Support Company and Battery A, 26th Field Artillery, have continued to conduct their respective missions here on Camp Liberty and in Baghdad.

Overall it has been a busy

Battalion, 20th Field Artillery (MLRS) has completed their move to Camp Liberty and have been welcomed back to the brigade.

589th Brigade Support Battalion has continued their excellent support to both the brigade

couple of months, with many Soldiers rotating out on leave and returning with big smiles on their faces and memories galore.

As we move into the fall months and redeployment, I would like to caution everyone about OPSEC or Operational Security.

Some of most important pieces of information about our redeployment are the movement and return times.

These are held confidential for security reasons right up until the actual departure from Iraq and arrival in the United States. For obvious reasons, your troopers do not know and can not disclose the actual dates and times of their return.

I can tell you that the brigade Please see **IG6** page 9

S-3 looks past the halfway point to home

By Capt. Jared Sutton
Assistant S-3, Fires Bde.

July has been a long anticipated month for many Soldiers and their families.

Not because there's anything terribly impressive about July. It gets up into the 110s here during the day. At night it will get down to about 80 degrees, which almost feels cold in comparison to the heat of the day. It will be hotter in the upcoming months.

What is special about July is that we've been here seven months already and we're (knock on wood) a little more than half way home.

This is the point where we turn the corner and see fewer months of deployment ahead of us, than we do behind us. It's a great feeling for both Soldiers and leaders knowing that they are more than half way through this deployment and getting closer to seeing

their families again.

I know my family has been looking forward to this point for a long time and I imagine other families have been, too.

Before I left, my wife made a chain of links out of construction paper for one of my sons. It had 52 links in it, one for each week of the year. The chain was so long that it ran across our china hutch and down both sides to pool on the floor.

Every Sunday, my wife would have my son cut a link off the chain to representing another week closer to redeployment. At first, my son complained that the cutting a single link each week didn't make much difference to the chain; it still looked like it was going to take forever for me to get back home.

Well those weeks have added up, and that chain is significantly shorter and gets shorter each week.

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Understanding myPay

By WO1 Arnold Guzman
Human Resources Tech

This month, I would like to inform you of some of the options available to all Soldiers and their spouses or family members through myPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>).

The three issues that I will discuss include: myPay account access for spouses or family members, information on how to read an LES, and new Savings Deposit Program information.

Did you know that all Army myPay users have the ability to assign a restricted access personal identification number (PIN) to a spouse or family member allowing them access to their myPay account?

This PIN provides access to the family member or designated individual who can then view the Soldier's pay account information, yet not allowing the individual to make any changes to their pay information.

The "restricted access PIN" gives the deployed member the peace of mind that the spouse or family member is able to verify pay information on LES statements and print out W-2 statements to complete tax forms. The Soldier can assign a restricted access pin by selecting the "Personal Settings Page" from their myPay menu.

The Soldier has total control of the restricted access PIN. They can assign, change and delete it at anytime. The Soldier can be assured that his/her account information is safe and secure.

Many of us have difficulty reading and understanding a Leave and Earnings Statement (LES). For details on how to read a military LES, you can visit the following website:

http://www.defenselink.mil/dfas/militarypay/newinformation/Active_Duty_LES_Guide.pdf. This website will provide you with detailed information on each section of a military LES.

For Soldiers who took advantage of the Savings Deposit Program, myPay was updated to include a SDP account balance query.

Soldiers will now have the option to view their current SDP balance and to identify if all their deposits have been properly credited to their accounts. The account history shows all deposits made by allotment or cash collection voucher and the date the transaction credited the SDP account. The current account balances will include all deposits and accrued interest up to and including the previous calendar month.

It is not too late to enroll in the SDP. Soldiers can still make deposits into the program and accrue interest on the account balance for up to 90 days after redeployment.

S-3, cont'd from pg. 2

Time will soon begin to pick up for all of us. We've even started to look at what it is going to take to get home.

We've taken out all the old plans and orders that brought us from Fort Hood to Iraq and dusted them off. Those old orders will be the basis for our plan for getting home. Many of the tasks remain the same; we just have to do them in reverse now.

While we're still many months from sending any equipment or Soldiers home, we have to start planning now.

My family is looking at what

we are going to do after redeployment. We're talking about where we might want to go on block leave. We're not making concrete plans, but we are discussing what each of us wants and needs out of the post-deployment leave. It helps us pass the time and gives us something pleasant to look forward too.

What ever your plans are following deployment, I hope the next few months pass quickly for you.

I think you will find the time will pass quicker and your family readiness group will be asking for help to set up welcome home signs for you favorite Soldiers.

Fires Bde. medics put compassion into action

By Capt. James Silverstrim
Brigade medical plans officer

"Once you begin to acknowledge random acts of kindness-both the ones you have received and the ones you have given-you can no longer believe that what you do does not matter." -- Dawna Markova, author and educator.

The history of the medical profession has always been focused on caring and compassion. Medics in the military are an extension of this history.

Classified as non combatants, medics provide care for their fellow soldiers, injured civilians, and even enemy wounded.

Last month, medical professionals from the Fires Brigade had an opportunity to provide health care to the local population. As part of the medical civic action program they were able to go out into the local community.

The primary objective of the MEDCAP is to provide increased outpatient care for Iraqi civilians. American and Iraqi medical personnel are utilized in the program, a major goal of which is to increase mutual respect and cooperation between the military forces and the civilian population.

Maj. Barbara Bowsher, brigade surgeon; Capt. Cleve Sylvester, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery physician assistant; Staff Sgt. Roland Walker, 2-20 FA medical noncommissioned officer; and Spc. Sarah Hess, 2-20 FA medic, participated in the mission.

These programs not only benefit the local community, but have a great impact on the military personnel involved.

Hess said she was very moved by the experience.

"I feel like I really made a difference today. It gave me better sense of purpose in the mission we have over here and I felt connected to our efforts to gain

Please see **MEDICS** page 10

S6 Soldiers focus on Ball, personal improvement

By Sgt. Barron Rhodes
Senior LAN manager

It has been a very busy month for the Fires Brigade S-6.

Maj Clarence White continues to challenge the S-6 Soldiers with chess and competitions that help keep up the spirit and motivation of the section.

White has also focused on physical training. He competed in a bench press competition, and to his credit, he "whipped" all of the officers in the run event of the brigade's staff officer Army Physical Fitness Test last month.

Master Sgt Trevor Jones was inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara at the Fires Brigade's Saint Barbara's Day Ball last month. Induction is limited to those who have been a great support to field artillery.

This honor reflects great credit upon the selfless service, hard work, leadership and mentorship Jones has displayed as the S-6 non-commissioned officer in charge.

Staff Sgt. Lisa Walters exceeded wild expectations and turned her two weeks of environmental morale leave into a tour of Greece and England.

While in Greece Walters visit-

ed Athens, the Acropolis and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. While in England she enjoyed visiting Stonehenge, the Tower of London and the Home of the Royal Artillery.

Sgt Patricia Matos was selected for promotion to staff sergeant. She also attended the difficult Sergeant Audie Murphy Board and was selected to join the prestigious Sgt. Audie Murphy Club.

She devoted numerous hours to study and preparation for the boards. Matos is an outstanding communications sergeant with a great future in the Signal Corps. Our congratulations go out to her for these two great accomplishments.

Sgt. Barron Rhodes has had a great month. He attended the promotion board and was selected to be promoted to staff sergeant. Rhodes has also been taking college courses online and is holding a 4.0 grade point average.

Spc. Brandon Cortez was extremely busy during the past month combining numerous photos taken of personnel throughout the brigade since the beginning of the deployment into a slideshow to welcome Soldiers to the Saint Barbara's Day Ball.



Photo by Spc. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO

Staff Sgt. Lisa Walters, playing a civilian reporter in a skit, tries to convince Command Sgt. Maj. Gilbert Canuela she didn't intentionally take part of the base charge for Fires Brigade's Artillery Punch.

While the entire brigade S-6 shop was involved in the ball in one way or another, Cortez was one of the critical players that made the event a great success.

S-4 discovers strengths and weaknesses of personnel

By Master Sgt. Shelly Gonsalves
S-4 NCOIC

The S-4 section has endured another long month in our deployment cycle. We've added much needed personnel to our section and finally received a bigger office to accommodate the growing staff.

Sgt. Kurt Gullens and Spc. Michael Russo spent a few weeks trying to assemble new furniture. It came with instructions, but not in English.

We discovered real quick that Russo had no carpentry or engineering skills. As a result we're just hoping our new furniture stays put together for at least the next five months.

We have been busy assisting the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery with its relocation from Forward Operating Base Q-West to Camp Liberty this month. We ensured all of our fellow logisticians found their way around and were set up and functional.

No more scanning documents to them or having to spend hours on the phone trying to get connected. This should make our redeployment a little less complicated. We know everyone is looking forward to that

moment.

The big planning event for our section was the brigade's Saint Barbara's Ball which took place on Camp Victory June 25. This turned out to be a very challenging event to put on during a deployment, and both Sgt. Sicily Eager and Russo did an outstanding job assisting me with this huge endeavor.

Everyone was real stressed out over the event. We had to depend on food support from a dining facility and that didn't work out so great. But overall the hard work paid off and the event was a big success.

During the ceremony, I was inducted into the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara and also got a chance to enjoy the taste of the punch after taking the oath.

Our soldiers continue to take advantage of the rest and relaxation leave rotation. Capt. Jerry Frimml returned all refreshed from his leave and discovered that it's difficult to get back into the swing of things.

He's a hard-working Wyoming farm boy who loves projects that take him outside of the office. We left a few of them for him to finish, since we had no

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Soldiers urged to research re-up options while bonuses current

**Sgt. 1st Class Mark Kirkland
Brigade Career Counselor**

June was a great month in sustaining America's Army. Ten Fires Brigade Soldiers reenlisted for a total bonus payout of more than \$70,000.



Recent budget restrictions implemented by the Army vice chief of staff caused the leadership at retention management branch to issue a warning order that bonuses could terminate without notice.

Sgt. Maj. Randy Kuhar of the retention management branch announced the last week of June that money had been allocated to sustain current Special Reenlistment Bonus programs until the end of fiscal year 2006.

All Soldiers expecting to take advantage of the bonus multipliers currently offered need to do so as soon as possible. Retention policy changes daily!

Now that we are over the half way mark of this deployment it's time to start looking at options available for Soldiers who plan to transition from the active Army once we redeploy.

The 4th Infantry Division Reserve Component Career Counselor, Master Sgt. Donna Bass is planning Reserves Component information briefs. There are many benefits to continuing service in the Guard or Reserves.

As the Army faces some challenges in the Global War on Terrorism, Soldiers realize they are a vital part of mission success.

Re-enlisting is a sterling indicator of the commitment our fellow Soldiers and loved ones have to this just fight.

Thank you for your dedication.

Stay Committed and stay Iron Gunners!

Wolfpack Soldiers reaffirm their commitment to Army

**By Capt. Albert Bossar
A/26 Commander**

First let me wish everyone a belated Happy 4th of July and remainder of the summer.

I know that for friends and family of the Wolfpack, the summer is in full swing. Many of the families are carrying on well as we enter the 8th month of the deployment and continue the march to our return home.

As the summer heat nears its peak here in Iraq, Battery A, 26th Field Artillery continues to carry on our mission and perform at a high standard.

Currently the battery is maintaining its entire spectrum of operations.

In the Radar Platoon, we have recently welcomed the arrival of a Q-36 radar section from Fort Sill, Okla.

1st Lt. Robert Lodewig and his section arrived in late June and have hit the ground running. A/26FA now has an even more diverse group of Soldiers than ever.

I would like to make a special note of the meteorological section as they have gone into 24-hour operations.

Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Webb and his section – Sgt. Luke Schwan, Spc. Ernest McIntosh, Pfc. Matthew Flynn, Pfc. Daniel Smith, Pfc. Heather Holland and Pfc. Jeffery Grant – pick up the MET missions on a 24 hour basis for the Ironhorse Division.

Their Profiler is a new system and we have been excited to take advantage of its capabilities. This was no easy task and it required a large amount of work and dedication to maintain a steady, 'round-the-clock support for the Division.

July was a huge promotion and re-enlistment month. I am honored to congratulate each and every one of these Soldiers as they continue to further their career in the Army by being rewarded with not only more rank and responsibility, but with a little more cash in the pocket — something that everyone can use a little more of at the end of the day.

Spc. Joshua Hammerslough and Spc. Aaron Taylor were promoted to sergeant.

Hammerslough has done a tremendous amount of work for the 2nd Radar Section location

Please see A/26 page 9



Photo contributed by A/26 FA

Capt. Albert Bossar stands ready to promote more than 10 of his Soldiers June 1 at Battery A, 26th Field Artillery Headquarters.

Staying in touch - the Soldier's view

By Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Malec
PAO NCOIC

How many times have you told yourself that you were going to make some resolutions for the New Year and actually stick to them? If you're like me, you would need more than your fingers and toes to count the number of times you made mention of them out loud or to yourself.

And how many of them have you actually stuck with to this point? Again, if you are like me, you would only need one hand of fingers or way less to list the number of resolutions you've actually held onto: those wonderful things you set out to do like get in better shape, be smarter with your money and my biggie for the year, keep in better touch with family and friends.

Every year I keep telling myself that I'm going to do better at this very thing that sometimes causes tension in even the closest of broods. And more often than not, I've received both calls and e-mails from disgruntled family members saying:

"We haven't heard from you in a million years. Why do I always hear news about you from Aunt Jane, but not from you?"

And, my personal all time favorite:

"How come you e-mailed Aunt Carroll, but you only courtesy copied me!"

What a way to kick a person while he's down. Well, take heart! As much as I've tried to use this deployment as a stepping stone to communicating better with my family, many times I still fall short. So I offer these tips which I think can be both useful to you and your loved one who's deployed.

I try to make it a point to set aside at least a half hour every other morning to call my loved one in San Antonio, nine hours behind Baghdad time. So, I call pretty early. That way, I get some good, old fashioned chat time in and can get a sense of how my wife and kids are doing by scrutinizing the tone of their voices.

That's something that just can't be done via e-mail or instant messaging, which is my second favorite way to communicate.

I save the instant message sessions for when I am finished with work for the day, and honestly, I'm finding it pretty much a crap shoot now that my kids are on summer break and are often monopolizing the family computer.

But sometimes I get my licks in and get to engage in an almost real conversation with my wife -- of course, devoid of voice and facial expressions. But compared to where we were back in my days spent in Bosnia, we've come a long way, Baby!

Sending an email is always a nice thing to do, even if it's just a couple of choppy sentences here and there saying that you're safe and well. But even this can seem like a daunting task depending on how long your contact list is. I personally feel that if you have a lot of news you wish to share at one time, there is absolutely no shame in mass emails. Some may think it's a very impersonal method to use, but I call it a very efficient one.

If you want to take this a step further, you can write the general message, copy and paste it and tailor it to the individual you wish to send it to. It will save time yet make the recipient feel special. Call it a dirty trick, call it what you want, but I'll call it efficient. And you'll be surprised how many well-wishers will spawn from your mass emails. From there, you can write a short, choppy message wishing them well in return or a long, elaborate one.

I save snail mail for Sundays when I usually gather some downtime to just sit and vegetate. Thanks to invention of computers, the World Wide Web, and e-mail, I now can easily find myself getting a cramp in my hand when I write a real honest-to-God letter. But I'll tell you that it's a morale booster for the person you are sending it to in three ways.

One: I feel it's a very personal and intimate way
Please see PAO page 10

Legal section, reunited, focuses on family

By Sgt. Matthew Edmonds
Legal NCO

The Fires Brigade Legal shop has reunited for the first time since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

Now the brigade legal office is the workplace for Staff Sgt. Jason Burke, myself and Spc. Jonathan Wheaton, who arrived recently from serving with the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Soldiers up at Forward Operating Base Q-West.

Emplacing an unwritten Legal shop standard, Wheaton and I passed the promotion board with a

maximum score of 150 points and we are now both promotable.

Back on the home front, Burke undoubtedly enjoyed his well deserved environmental morale leave with family and friends.

My wife, Tammy, returned to Killeen from Louisiana and has rented a house off post, while my son, Gatlin, gears up for his pre-school classes this fall.

Wheaton has a baby boy, Logan, due August 5, and has been eagerly waiting to get back home for just this reason.

One last thing of significance to report on this Soldier: He actual-

ly ETS'd July 7, but unfortunately his appointment with the transition office was postponed until March 31 of next year.

He is considering his options, and tentatively plans to attend school while seeking a position as a Department of the Army civilian paralegal.

As always, the Fires Brigade Legal Shop stands ready and capable to quickly and efficiently play their supporting role in the 4th Infantry Division's Fire Brigade by providing top notch legal services for Soldiers whether at home or deployed.

589th BSB SPOT Team keeps MND-B supplied

By Capt. Daniel Freschi
SPOT Team leader

Nothing Happens Until Something Moves and nothing moves without transportation.

In the case of 589th Brigade Support Battalion, the *esprit de corps* of the Transportation Corps speaks volumes. The 589th BSB support operations houses a cell exclusively for transportation operations, equipped with the fitting nickname The SPOT Team.

It is via their constant planning and attention to meticulous detail that movement operations involving the 589th BSB throughout the Iraqi Theater, receive authorization, proper coordination details, and other pertinent information critical to mission success.

The above characteristics pertain most importantly to off base operations to include our Combat Logistics Patrols led by the distribution company (Company A) of 589th BSB into the surrounding areas of Baghdad and beyond.

The SPOT Team assumes all transportation coordination for several classes of supplies to be delivered through the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area of responsi-



Photo contributed by 589th BSB

The members of the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, from left: Capt. Daniel Freschi; Sgt. 1st Class Wilemina Jules; Sgt. 1st Class Renoir Riley; Staff Sgt. Doak Tackett; and Staff Sgt. Bryan Dunnaway.

bility, which allows for 100 percent focus on battle drills, rules of engagement and safety by all convoy personnel.

As of June, more than 126 Co. A convoys had been successfully completed, providing life sustaining supplies to our Army brethren, providing upgrades to the Iraqi government infrastructure and assisting lat-

eral units with their logistical backlog in the MND-B AOR.

A current focus of the 589th BSB is involvement in a Division sponsored Operation Money Worth. Operation Money Worth greatly improved the force protection levels of 21 permanent Iraqi Security Force checkpoints spread through-

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Hard Rock celebrates promotions, recreation

By Pfc. James Richardson
Orderly Room Clerk

Well here we are already into July and it's getting hotter than a Texas Crawfish Festival, but are staying the course and getting our missions done.

But before we get into this too far, the Hard Rock Battery would like to thank all of our family and friends back home for their support and all of those big boxes of snacks. We would never make it through the day if it weren't for the snacks, or the support.

I am also happy to say that after more than 80 convoy missions, our personnel security detachment still has not had any incidences to report. All the training pays off, along with a little bit of luck. Another big factor is the team leader, Sgt. Joshua Turner, constantly keeping the guys in line.

The main reason the Hard Rock battery is staying strong minded and physically fit is because of our big man in charge of it all.

I guess you can say we are like the Miami Heat. They have Shaq and we have our battery commander Capt. Damon Wells and our Dwayne Wade is 1st Sgt.

Kenneth Carmickle. Our executive officer, newly promoted Capt. Maxwell Fuldauer, can't really be matched with a basketball hero. But without him we would be like the Dallas Mavericks sitting at home licking our wounds.

The rest of our "line-up" has also been successful..

Pfc. Luis Garcia received his well deserved promotion to specialist, and also took top honors in the brigade Soldier of the Month Competition in June.

Pfc. Robert Shofner, who recently joined the PSD team, was also promoted to specialist.

And as mentioned earlier, we also had the great pleasure in promoting Lieutenant Fuldauer to Captain. He hails from St. Petersburg, Fla., and attended school at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, and has a wife named Ruth who is active in the Battery Family Readiness Group.

Besides all of the work we do, the Hard Rock battery also loves to have a little bit of fun. We have Soldier activities every Saturday or Sunday night. While we are having fun, our barbeque guru Sgt. Isaias Clay usually grills up steaks, hotdogs and hamburgers for us to

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Duece is fight to fight

By Staff Sergeant Michele Miller
Fires Brigade S-2 Topographic NCOIC

Providing vital intelligence information to subordinate units is not the only task that the Fires Brigade S-2 section focuses on. Physical fitness is also a priority.

On June 3, select S-2 personnel, along with several hundred other servicemembers and DOD civilians in the Baghdad area, participated in the 72nd Task Force Desert Fighter 7.2 mile Fun Run around the Liberty and Victory Base Complex.

In spite of multiple distractions such as rocks, gravel, dust, and heat, we dug deep and completed the course with ease.

Soldiers know all too well that physical fitness plays a key roll in mission readiness so we continue to look for ways to enhance our physical training program.

On another note, in recent days the S-2 shop experienced a metamorphosis. Master Sgt. Rodney Byus transitioned over to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 589th Brigade Support Battalion to become first sergeant.

Sgt. 1st Class John Coleman is lending his expert logistics and administrative support to the Fires Brigade S-1 section.

Sgt. 1st Class Adam Scarr, who enjoyed environmental morale leave after completing his mission at the rear operations center is now the Fires Brigade S-2 non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

Our S-2 Soldiers are still doing great things at Division. Maj. Bryan Gibby is putting his analytical skills to good use by tracking down the "bad guys of Baghdad."

The fire effects cell S-2 is conducting indirect fire analysis and helping the Iraqi Army track IDF trends and cells as the IA takes over more battle space in and around the capital.

In the midst of personnel movements and the hustle and bustle of multiple activities and missions, Soldiers of the Fires Brigade S-2 continue to dedicate themselves to maintaining their fit to fight status. Go Deuce!



The Fires Bde. S-2 section, after the 72nd Task Force Desert Fighter Fun Run. From left: Sgt. David Penton, Capt. Richard Ward, Sgt. Bradford Oliver, Master Sgt. Rodney Byus, Spc. Sean Hefflin (kneeling), Staff Sgt. Michele Miller, Sgt. 1st Class Adam Scarr and Spc. Matthew Wilson

324th NSC Spotlights Pfc. Leandra Sotelo

By 1st Lt. Amber Spain
324th NSC XO

Pfc. Leandra Sotelo, of 324th Network Support Company, goes above and beyond her call of duty.

Sotelo's role as a chemical operations specialist would usually be filled in our company by a sergeant.



Yet she does a fantastic job keeping her unit informed of the latest and greatest in the NBC world.

Beside her assigned duty, she also carries the additional duty of training room and operations non-commissioned officer. A sergeant usually fills this position and also has a clerk; however, Sotelo carries the load alone.

Pfc. Leandra Sotelo

She is responsible for tracking environmental morale leave dates, awards, and promotions. She is also responsible for tracking operational orders from the Fires Brigade and disseminating information to the unit.

Although work keeps her occupied, Sotelo secured the title of Soldier of the Month and Soldier of the Quarter for the third quarter for the Fires Brigade.

She competed against several Soldiers in the brigade to bring home the title. The Soldier of the Month/Quarter is an esteemed position and only the smartest and disciplined soldiers are able to win the title.

Sotelo is one of the best Soldiers I have worked with. When I was informed she would take the position as the training room and operations NCO I was a little concerned because of her experience and skill level.

She has risen to the challenge and has proven she can handle multiple tasks. The chain of command can give her and has given her multiple tasks and she successfully executes them.

If she does not know how to accomplish a given task she will not hesitate to ask.

Sotelo is a model Soldier. She possesses and lives by the Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. She always has high spirits and never complains.

Upon redeployment, Sotelo would like to attend the L4 Biological Detection Systems Course. In this course she will learn the biological identification and detection principles, and the procedures required to perform biological identification and detection operations.

After she completes L4 Biological Detection Systems Course, she and her husband would like to be stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Celebrating the history of Independence Day

Staff Sgt. Michael Miles
Fires Brigade Chaplain NCO

On the 4th of July, we celebrated Independence Day.

It all began 230 years ago, when on July 4, 1776, 56 brave men signed a document known as "The Declaration of Independence." It was the document that declared both our independence from the rule of Britain and our forefather's dependence on God.

Have you ever wondered just who those 56 men were who signed the Declaration of Independence and what happened to them?

We know about some, like Jefferson, Hancock and Franklin, but not a lot about the others.

Well, 24 were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants; at least nine were farmers and large plantation owners. Most were well-educated, men of means.

The men who signed that document did so knowing that what they were doing placed them, their families and property at great risk. Yet it was a risk they were willing to take.

Seventeen of the signers actu-

ally fought in the revolution. Five signers were captured by the British. Richard Stockton of New Jersey died while incarcerated.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of our forefathers in the American Revolution. These weren't wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were well-spoken, educated men. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight and unwavering, they pledged with their signing of a document on July 4, 1776: "For the support of that declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

These weren't empty words; they were backed up by actions and sacrifices.

When we celebrate our nation's independence, I hope we don't overlook the role that our founding fathers' dependence upon God played in the birth of our nation.

At the first Constitutional Convention, the delegates were frustrated due to the burdens of the hour. They were so fragmented that

they were just about to throw out the whole concept of a constitution completely.

Just then an old white-haired man by the name of Benjamin Franklin rose to his feet and said: "Gentlemen, if it is true that not one single petal from any flower falls to the ground without escaping God's attention, will the distress of this nation go unheeded? Let us therefore determine to seek His face."

Just like our forefathers, we find ourselves fighting for freedom. Today, we continue the fight for freedom in our nation and the freedom of Iraqi people in the global war on terror.

We are reminded in history and in scripture in how to win true freedom. The Psalmist wrote long ago that "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*" (Psalm 33:12). Are you depending on God to bring you true freedom like our forefathers? True freedom can never be enjoyed by people who refuse to fear God.

Today, commit yourself to living as one of God's people because that is the way to have true freedom.

IG6, cont'd from pg. 2 —

will return in the November/December timeframe. As we get closer to redeployment, the dates will be further refined and disseminated by the Rear Detachment.

I ask of everyone that you remain patient and flexible as the dates can change and return times are not certain until we actually board a plane.

More details will be forthcoming from the Rear Detachment and the FRG as we receive them.

Once again, as I like to do at the end of these articles, I want to thank all of the families, friends and spouses of the Fires Brigade for your support to one another, our brigade and our nation.

Your contributions to this operation do not go unnoticed. Thanks for all you do.

A/26, cont'd from pg. 5

here at Camp Liberty, building most of the current structure shading the section from the blistering sun.

Taylor, who serves as my driver, was a special promotion. Taylor is an outstanding young Soldier who not only manages the training room, but also takes care of me during our convoy missions. It was a real honor to promote him on July 1.

The next group of Soldiers was promoted from the rank of private first class to specialist. Congratulations to the following Wolfpack soldiers: Spcs. Michael Probst, Jesus Avila, Clarence Craig, Allen Jones, Christopher Jones and Oliver Yeboah.

Last but certainly not least, Pvt2 Cody Purcell and Pvt2 Daniel Smith were both promoted to private first class.

It is always my biggest honor to re-enlist a Soldier in A/26 FA. It is typically a special occasion for not only the Soldiers, but for their section chief and section leader alike, as well as all their family members. I take great pride when given the honor to be a part of these events.

A/26 FA had three Soldiers re-enlist in July: Sgt. Jason Young, Spc. Michael Ash and Spc. Daniel Zupan. The Army and I are grateful for their service and their willingness to continue to serve this country. Congratulations also to their friends and families!

Finally I would like to welcome Sgt. William Rassman and his wife, Karen. Rassman is a fire support NCO and new addition to our convoy team. I wish them well and am glad to have them as part of the Wolfpack.

To everyone back home or at Fort Hood, take care and God bless!

MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 3

Photo contributed by Capt. James Silverstrim

Spc. Timothy Peters practices putting a cast on one of his fellow medics.

the trust of the Iraqi people," Hess stated.

The mission was part of the right-seat-ride between 2-20 FA and

3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, which is in the process of redeploying to Fort Drum.

The careful planning and preparation conducted in May enabled a successful transition from Forward Operating Base Q-West in northern Iraq to Camp Liberty in Baghdad. The medical section of 2-20 FA, comprised of nine medics, a physician assistant, and a medical platoon leader now call Camp Liberty home.

Upon arrival, the medical section immediately went to work familiarizing themselves with their area of operation and the available medical resources.

Base security is the primary mission of 2-20 FA, and the medical section has been tasked to provide health service support to fulfill this mission. This includes having medics integrated into daily security patrols and standing ready to provide care at a critical entry control point.

As part of the relief in place and transfer of authority process with 3-6 FA, the medics participated in a casualty evacuation exercise from an 85 foot guard tower as well as a mass casualty exercise with eight simulated casualties.

Training exercises like these prepared the medical section to take over all medical operations from the outgoing unit on June 26.

One medic, Spc. Reggie Lockett, will have quite a story to share for the rest of his life following an incident on his first night of duty. Lockett had been tasked to provide medical coverage at one of the main entry control points.

At 3 a.m., June 27, Soldiers reported that some British contractors had been involved in an automobile accident right outside the ECP.

The single vehicle accident was a rollover, injuring three men. The casualties were evacuated to the ECP, where Lockett was waiting to provide medical assistance.

Please see **MEDICS** page 11

HBB, cont'd from pg. 7

enjoy.

Some of the activities that we've been doing have include game nights where Soldiers get together with their game systems to try to beat Sgt. Fahad Jaha in Halo2. And our PSD team won the MWR Volleyball tournament which goes to show you that the Hard Rock battery is the best in Iraq.

My favorite activity was Casino night, sponsored by the S-1 and Legal shops. We played Texas Hold'Em and Blackjack. But the best part of the evening was betting on the Ultimate Fighting Championships fights.

I might add that Staff Sgt. Robert Martinez from the S-6 section walked away the big winner that night with a brand new Sony Playstation which was donated for the event.

Now a little bit about me: the author of this article. I am 26 years old and I have been in the military for a year and a half. I am the first sergeant's driver. I also work in the battery orderly room and handle paperwork and other actions for the BC, first sergeant and XO.

I grew up in Orange Texas, and this is both my first deployment and Army assignment.

I'd also like to send a message to my family; I love you and miss you and can't wait to see you when I get home.

We as a battery have progressed due to the dedication of every Soldier from private to colonel. We thank all of you at home for your support because it's for you that we put it all on the line. I am proud to be an American.

Don't forget that we all love you and need your support to keep us going while where here.

If you have any questions please contact our family readiness group leader Andrea Wells at andrea.j.wells@us.army.mil or the Battery Commander at gabriel.wells@us.army.mil.

Thank you again for your support. **HARD ROCK!**

PAO, cont'd from pg. 6

to communicate your love to the one you are sending it to.

Two: It shows the one that you are writing to that they were worth your time and energy.

And three: If you are sending a letter to your loved one, the paper allows you to throw a little something on it like perfume or cologne. Can't do that through e-mail or instant messaging.

So now that I've rambled on about keeping in better touch with folks, I will use more of my energy to make a concerted effort to communicate with my family and friends.

But not before I close out by saying that all the Soldiers of the Fires Brigade are continuing to do a stellar job in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07 and you should be very proud of them. So write to them when you get a chance.

We will see you sooner than you think. Stay safe, because we want you around when we return.

MEDICS, cont'd from pg. 10

Lockett assessed treated, and prepared the casualties for further evacuation to a military medical treatment facility for definitive care. He continued to treat the casualties in the rear of the ambulance as it was driven to the MTF.

En route, one of the injured men went into cardiac arrest. Lockett immediately began performing CPR. Due to Lockett's efforts, the man regained a heartbeat and began breathing on his own. Thanks to his training, Spc. Lockett lived every medic's dream and saved a life.

While most of 2-20 FA moved to Camp Liberty, Battery A remains in Fallujah, where two medics trained 13 Soldiers to be combat lifesavers.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Battery medical section continues to support several diverse missions within the 4th Infantry Division.

Spc. Patrie Campbell-Sobish continues to work with the military transition training team for the 6th Iraqi Army. Campbell is currently the acting senior medic while the senior medic is home on leave. Her job includes medical coverage of their convoys as well as supervision and guidance of the Iraqi medics.

Two other HHB medics, Spc. Larry Mellette and Spc. Jeffery Legere, continue to provide coverage for the 4th Inf. Div. detainee

holding area. They work 24 hour shifts at the DHA providing medical care for detainees.

Sgt. Angelina Marrero and Spc. Timothy Peters provided medical coverage for several convoys last month. Legere provided medical coverage for a weapons range in addition to his DHA duties.

Expert Field Medical Badge training continued last month. June's training included EMT lanes with SimMan, a 100-question written test and nuclear, biological, and chemical threat training.

Soldiers also attended medical lectures on suturing, casting and splinting, and muscle and joint exams. These lectures provide growth of the medical knowledge of all the medics for actions here as well as further down the road in their military careers.

An additional highlight of last month was the opportunity to send two HHB medics to the Advanced Cardiac Life Saver course.

Cpl. Saul Trevino and Pfc. Alex Mecca, both serving as personal security detail medics, passed the course and now have a five-year ACLS certification. They trained with Lt. Col. Jon Allison, an ACLS certified instructor, for several long nights in the weeks prior to the class.

"I was over-prepared for this course, which was a good thing. We were the two lowest ranking

people attending the course and ended up doing better than some of the doctors and PA's there," said Mecca. Hopefully, we'll be able to send more of our medics for ACLS certification before we come home.

For the medical operations section of the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, Soldier medical readiness was the focal point.

Staff Sgt. Chris Parks conducted his third kamikaze medic mission, in which he administered shots to delinquent Soldiers within the battalion. Sgt. Jose Trevizo, who works at the 602nd ASMC as a patient administration NCO, provides the "Hit List" to Parks.

Once Parks completes giving shots, Trevizo updates the Soldiers' records in Medical Protection Service — the online Army medical tracking system.

The medical readiness program in the 589th BSB has set the standard for the Fires Bde., maintaining medical readiness rates over 95 percent.

The time over here doesn't always go by as quickly as we might hope, but the months continue to pass and the time before we come home continues to become shorter and shorter.

We will continue to keep everyone posted on the missions we are supporting over here. Until next month, thanks for all your support and prayers.

S-4, cont'd from pg. 4

luck with the real electricians.

Gullens made a surprise visit home to his family. He originally requested not to go on leave but by the six month point, I highly and nicely encouraged him to go. We know his family had a very pleasant surprise and we congratulate him and his wife on purchasing their first home together.

On July 1, both Eager and I celebrated our birthdays. At first, we couldn't quite figure out how so many people knew it was our birthday; but we discovered how when we went to the laundry facility to drop off our clothes.

There was a big sign saying happy birthday to the both of us. We all think our public affairs office had a little something to do with that.*

Eager left shortly after her birthday for her long awaited turn to go on leave. The office is so quiet right now without her around, but Gullens returned

from leave just in time. He will definitely ensure that I'll still have someone to fuss at.

This month we welcome Master Sgt. Cherry Sibert and Maj. John Roadcap, better known as Road Rage, to our section.

Sibert has quickly become familiar with the pain of Power Point slides and the difficulty of tracking all of the brigade's maintenance issues.

We know they will both be a huge asset to the section!

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*Editor's note: I admit to telling the kind laundry people that it was Sgt. Sisily Eager's birthday, but I believe she in kind wanted to share the celebration with her NCOIC.-Spc. Allison Churchill

SPOT, cont'd from pg. 7

out the city of Baghdad and greater Baghdad area.

As the 4th Infantry Division has continued transferring authority to the Iraqi people, American occupied and controlled bases have been closed or transferred. 589th BSB has had a large roll in this process, being responsible for removal of defense material for reuse elsewhere in theater.

More than 1,500 concrete barriers have been moved by Company A Palletized Load Systems and reconsolidated into a barrier holding yard.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company B elements have provided gun truck security for these movements.

Staff Sgt. Doak Tackett, a new member of the SPOT Team has played a tremendous part in preparing a majority of these convoys. He coordinates for clearances of each mission and then follows the live movements on the battlefield though digital tracking and radio communication. This information proves an invaluable resource to the battalion, keeping all Soldiers abreast of the current details of each mission.

Other missions have included processing and planning transportation and air movement requests for Soldiers and equipment throughout Iraq. For instance, the SPOT Team flew Staff Sgt. Bryan Dunnaway to conduct a reconnaissance of future

mission support and meet our customers face-to-face to determine their needs for superior logistical support.

Early on, the SPOT Team leader, Capt. Daniel Freschi, outfitted the battalion with more than 350 vehicles and crucial pieces of equipment. Without this equipment the Brigade would have been at a complete standstill, with little hope to accomplish any mission.

This critical action was completed prior to the 4th Infantry Division arriving in Iraq and set the tone for the SPOT Team's operations for the remainder of the deployment.

"The SPOT Team provides on-time, on-target logistics and transportation support with 100 percent customer focus, allowing Soldiers the maximum time for flexibility and maneuverability on the battlefield," said Freschi.

"The Soldiers on the SPOT Team are by far the best the battalion, brigade and Army have in its ranks. My transportation management coordinators are first-class and know their jobs without question," continued Freschi.

The SPOT Team is heavily loaded with veteran leadership; three sergeants first class and two staff sergeants.

Their ability to pull from prior experiences makes them a superior logistical force enabler when

maneuvering and supporting battalions throughout the Army.

Sgt. 1st Class Wilemina Jules, the transportation logistics noncommissioned officer who is responsible for all external logistics, was recently promoted to sergeant first class after just seven years in the service. In the NCO Corps this is an extremely rare feat and further emphasizes the leadership and experiences this team possesses.

One of the SPOT Team's recent accomplishments included planning, executing and tracking 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery's move from Forward Operating Base Q-west to Camp Liberty.

The SPOT Team helped successfully move 368 passengers, 17 tracked vehicles, 58 containers and 93 wheeled vehicles. All equipment and personnel was accounted for upon arrival.

Three SPOT team members received the Army Achievement Medal from Lt. Col. Mark Johnson, 2-20 FA commander.

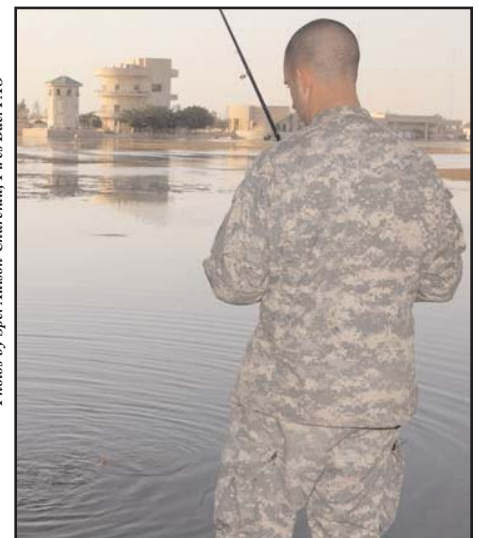
"We were just doing our job, providing the best transportation support we can. It's an honor to receive such awards because the Army pays us good money to do our best and that's what the SPOT Team does all the time," said Freschi.

The SPOT Team's accomplishment shows the true definition of teamwork, loyalty and dedication to the mission.



Fires Brigade Soldiers pose for a photo after bringing home the medals and the muscle in a bench press competition.

Cpl. David Hite stirs up the water outside the Saint Barbara's Day Ball festivities.



Photos by Spec. Allison Churchill, Fires Bde. PAO